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MARY HAZELDINE'S DESK

BY MRS. H. H. D. PAUL









THE LITTLE GIRL AT THE STATION (p. 9).

MARY HAZELDINE'S DESK.

BY

MRS. H. H. B. PAULL,

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"Overcome evil with good."

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MARY HAZELDINE'S DESK.

CHAPTER I.

AT THE STATION.



TRAIN ran slowly into the Charing Cross Station one foggy night, not many years ago. It had scarcely stopped when the doors flew open, and a number of passengers, looking tired and chilled with the cold journey from Dover, hastened to alight and claim their luggage.

Even those who had joined the train at intermediate stations rushed about shivering and coughing as they inhaled the fog, and eagerly inquired for their boxes. Happy at such a time were those who could lift a carpet-bag or a basket from the train, and hasten home to warm rooms and a blazing fire, untroubled with more luggage than they could carry.

The seeming bustle and confusion which usually attends the arrival of a train from a distant station,

the loading of cabs, the rapid movements of porters, and the rumbling of wheels as the passengers drove away, came to an end so quickly, that to a little passenger seated on the platform the station seemed to be cleared by magic. She shivered now and then as she sat, for her clothes were ill-suited to the weather, yet her eyes were watching through the fog a middle-aged porter, who was examining the carriages of the empty train and closing the doors. As he approached the spot, the little figure became visible in the gas-light. He paused, and then advanced towards her.

"Are you waiting for any one, little Miss?" were the words that made the child rise and say,—

"Oh, yes ; I've come from Dover, and I was told to wait here till some one came to meet me ; and I had a box, but I don't know where it is ;" and the childish voice faltered, and the tears would come.

"Now don't you fret, Miss," said the porter kindly ; "the box is all right, I dare say : come with me, I will soon find it."

"It's covered with paper," she said as she eagerly accompanied the porter along the platform, on which the lights gleamed dimly through the fog, to a spot near the luggage van. "Oh, there it is,—that's my box!" she exclaimed, pointing to a paper-covered trunk that stood by itself.

"Oh, come now, that's all right, little one," said the

man as he lifted the box on his shoulder, "and now come with me to the ladies' waiting-room : there's sure to be a jolly fire there, so you needn't wait in the cold any longer." He opened the waiting-room door as he spoke, and said, "Mrs. West, please let this poor little mite sit by the fire and get warm ; she's been a-waiting outside in the fog for somebody to meet her who ain't come yet, and she seems half perished with cold ;" and the good-natured porter, feeling satisfied that he had placed the poor child in safe hands, laid the box on the floor and turned to go.

"Oh, please," she exclaimed, arresting the friendly porter's steps, "how shall I know when any one comes for me?"

"Don't you be afeared, my dear, I'll not forget to come and tell you, so make yourself comfortable."

Mary Hazeldine, with her anxiety removed, was not likely to neglect the man's advice. She drew near the warm iron guard that protected a blazing fire, and for some minutes forgot her sorrows and her fears in the genial warmth.

Kind-hearted Mrs. West contemplated the youthful figure in mourning with deep interest. The common material of which the dress was made, and the scarcity of crape on the jacket and the black straw hat, denoted poverty ; yet the child's delicate features and fair gentle face, with wavy bands of brown hair on

the forehead, and curls in a net behind, spoke of refinement and good birth.

Presently she turned from the fire, and meeting the kind eyes of Mrs. West, she smiled and said,—

“I’m so warm and comfortable now, but I wish somebody would come for me, it’s getting so late.”

“Have you far to go, my dear?”

“I don’t know, but it’s in London, and I have never been here before: is there always a fog like this?”

Mrs. West laughed as she replied,—

“No, my dear, we’re not so badly off as that; we do have bright frosty days in London sometimes, and it’s a pity you should see it for the first time in such a fog.”

“Yes, it is a pity, and it made me feel more miserable when they told me this was Charing Cross Station, and there was no one here to meet me.”

“Why did your friends allow you to travel so far alone?”

“I have no friends at Dover now; mamma and papa are dead,” she replied; “only my old nurse and her daughter;” and the voice faltered, but with an effort she kept back the tears, and fearing that what she had said might represent her old nurse as unkind in allowing her to travel so far alone, she said, “I am going to live with my uncle, papa’s brother,

and he wrote to nurse and told her to send me to Charing Cross under the care of the guard, and that if I waited on the platform some one would be there to meet me. And I've been here nearly half an hour," she continued, looking at the clock. "Oh dear, what shall I do, if nobody comes!"

"Oh, don't be anxious about that, my dear," said Mrs. West; "if you can tell us your uncle's name, we'll soon find out where he lives, and send somebody home with you."

Meanwhile the footman, who had received orders from his master to meet Miss Mary Hazeldine at the station with anything but satisfaction, comforted himself by calling for a friend on his way. As usual in many families, the servants of Mr. Hazeldine were more *au fait* in their knowledge of the affairs of the household than either the master or the mistress imagined.

"I ain't going to hurry myself about no pauper's children because they're a-coming to our house," he said to himself, "and Miss Mary Hazeldine may wait till I fetches her."

With feelings such as these in his heart it will not be considered surprising that Mr. Hazeldine's manservant, who supposed it "the thing" to ape the family pride, should enter the Charing Cross Station just three-quarters of an hour after the arrival of the

train he had been told to meet. Our friend the porter, who was still on the arrival platform awaiting another train, spied the young man in livery, who was looking about at the deserted platform with a disconcerted air, which quickly changed to a look of anxiety.

"Oh, I see," said the porter to himself, "I'll warrant that's the young fellow as was told to meet the 7.30, and now it's a quarter arter eight. I'll give him a bit of a fright, now see if I don't: it'll do him good."

Following up this determination, No. 27 sauntered along the platform, and presently loomed out of the fog just in front of the now disconcerted messenger. The sight of an official was a great relief; but our friend passed him by with assumed indifference.

"Porter! porter!" cried the young man, following him with hasty steps to gain his attention, before he again disappeared in the fog.

"He'll be tumbling over on to the metals if I don't stop," said our friend to himself; then he paused and asked, "What is it you want, sir?"

"Oh," replied Parkes, almost breathless with haste and anxiety, "is the 7.30 train from Dover in yet?"

"The 7.30?—why yes, in course it is, nearly an hour ago."

"Did a little girl come by that train?"

"Well, yes, there was lots o' little girls; which on 'em might you want?"

"Oh, one in black, that came third class by herself."

No. 27 saw the real anxiety under which the generally supercilious footman was suffering, and longed to continue the punishment, but the 8.20 train had been signalled, and he knew he had no time to spare, so he said,—

"There was a young lady in black as came by the 7.30 train, and if it hadn't pleased God to put it into my heart to take care of her this foggy night, I wonder what would have become of her. I suppose as it was you she expected to be here to meet her."

"Well, yes; but I was hindered, and couldn't come earlier. Where is she? don't keep me, porter;" he added, as the report of fog signals announced the approach of the train, and made No. 27 turn to go.

"You must wait till this train's in now," said the porter, "or you won't be let pass without a ticket;" and he turned away quickly as he spoke.

For some minutes the platform exhibited its usual state of bustle and confusion, but not for long, the passengers by this train being few in number. Yet these few minutes were a period of torture to Mr. Hazeldine's footman. "We shan't get home till half-past nine at this rate," he said to himself; and then,

as the cabs departed one after another, he thought, with a feeling of despair, that there would be none left for him.

This delay in one respect, however, proved an advantage, for the fog lifted, and No. 27, considering that the consequential gentleman in livery had been sufficiently punished, presented himself as the last passenger and his luggage drove off.

"I've kept her safe for you," he said; "the child's been took care of in the ladies' waiting-room; and next time you're sent to meet a young lady at the station, I hope you'll be more punctual. Do you know her?"

"No, but she'll understand that it's all right when I say I've come from Mr. Hazeldine, of Holland Park, Bayswater."

"Here's somebody for you at last, Missy," said the porter, pushing open the door of the waiting-room.

"Oh, I'm so glad; are you sure it's somebody for me?"

"Is your name Hazeldine—Miss?"

The latter word came forth spontaneously, after a glance at the poorly clad child, whom Parkes had been led to look upon as *a beggar*, and who yet, to his surprise, had the appearance and voice of a lady.

"Yes, I am Mary Hazeldine," she said; "and I suppose you have come from Uncle George for me."

I am quite ready, and there's my box." Then turning to Mrs. West, the child held out her hand, and as she leaned forward and kissed the kind face, she said,—

"Good-bye; oh, thank you so much for taking care of me."

Mary Hazeldine could complain no longer of neglect or loneliness. Mrs. West went with her to the platform, and Mr. Parkes not condescending to touch the box, No. 27 lifted it on his own shoulder and carried it to the cab.

He then placed the child inside, while Parkes mounted to the box by the driver, congratulating himself that the fog having cleared he could ride outside. To face the "young lady," as he felt obliged to designate her, whom he had so neglected, was impossible now.

"It's not my fault," thought the young man. "I heard Mrs. Hazeldine myself call the child a *beggar's brat*, and how could I suppose she would even look like a lady? and I believe she is one too."

While Parkes, thus musing, was seating himself by the driver, the porter stood by the open door of the cab, having a few last words with his little charge.

"Good-bye, Miss," he said, "you'll soon be home now."

"Good-bye, and thank you, porter," she said;

"and I'm so sorry to give you all this trouble, and I've only a shilling, but if you will take sixpence ;" and as Mary Hazeldine spoke, she offered half of all the money she possessed in the world, to the kind-hearted porter.

The man started back.

"What, take your money, little one !" he said. "No, no, God forbid I should rob the orphan ; I've got children of my own, at home, but they've got a father to work for 'em, and you haven't."

"I'm not afraid," she said. "God will take care of me ; He has to-night, hasn't He, when I was left here all alone, and He sent you to me ?"

At this moment the driver looked round.

"All right, cabby," said the porter, as he closed the door ; but his eyes were full of tears, as he looked in on the young traveller, and said in a choked voice,—

"Good-bye, once more, little Missy, God bless you ! Draw up the window," he added, as the cab moved.

CHAPTER II.

A DOUBTFUL WELCOME.



PARTY of six were seated at dessert in the dining-room of one of those fashionable and modern houses which stand on the borders of what was once part of a beautiful park.

Less than forty years ago, when the village of Bayswater and the neighbourhood round and near Lord Holland's Park formed a rural district of London, the sweet notes of the nightingale might be heard in full melody by travellers passing up or down Notting Hill on a summer's night.

The meadows and fields which then spread far and wide for miles have disappeared. Here and there, however, noble trees have been spared by the builders, forming groves and squares, or shady walks which remind those of a past generation of the lovely country lanes overshadowed by trees in which they had wandered in their youthful days.

In no part of this fashionable suburb is there so much remaining to recall the past by tree-shaded houses, as that in which Mary Hazeldine's uncle

resided ; but of this fact the child knew nothing. She had been told that her uncle George was a rich London merchant, living in a beautiful house near Bayswater, and the appearance of a footman in livery, who had been sent to fetch her, confirmed what she had heard.

At first she was attracted to the gas-lighted streets of London through which the cab drove, but at that late hour many shops were closed, and Mary leaned back in the cab and began to form some idea in her mind of what her uncle and aunt and cousins would be like, and of the house now to be her home.

Perhaps the lonely child now performing her journey through London in a cab, might have been forgotten by the party seated at dessert in that richly furnished dining-room, but for the absence of Parkes. He had waited at table with the parlour-maid at the half-past six o'clock dinner until seven, and his place had then been supplied by a housemaid.

The visitors, who with Mr. Hazeldine and his wife and two daughters, made up the number of six at the table, were not strangers, being the mother and younger sister of Mrs. Hazeldine. Therefore, when the servants had left the room, Mrs. Burford remarked to her daughter,—

“ I suppose Parkes has gone to the station for that *child* ? ”

"Yes ; isn't it a nuisance ? Just as if we hadn't children enough of our own in the nursery."

"Poor Charlie's girl will be too old for the nursery, my dear," said Mr. Hazeldine. "She was a few months' old at my brother's death, and must be at least eleven years old now."

"That makes matters worse," replied his wife. "How can we expect Miss Groves to receive another in the schoolroom ? I declare the whole affair is worrying me terribly."

"But," said Mrs. Burford, "I cannot understand why you and George should be burdened with this girl : had the mother no friends ?"

"Not in a position to maintain an orphan,—at least, so I suppose. You know what a low marriage Charles Hazeldine made," she added in a suppressed voice. Mrs. Hazeldine glanced at her husband as she spoke. She knew well how it pained him to refer to his brother's marriage in this way ; and warned by his look of displeasure, she gave the signal for leaving the table. As they crossed the hall, Mrs. Hazeldine whispered to her mother,—

"George can't bear to have a word said against his brother. I'll tell you all about it in the drawing-room."

"Well, I really should like to know," replied Mrs. Burford. "We have lived so long in France since

we left India on account of your poor father's health, that who this child is, and who her parents were, are mysteries to me."

"Don't you remember George's brother, mamma?"

"I think I met him once at your marriage, Louisa. Was he married then?"

"No; and it's a pity he ever did marry into such a low, poverty-stricken family. Why, mamma, Charles Hazeldine's wife was a poor nursery governess, the daughter of an organist, with an income of only £80 a year; and George said that when he went to see his dying brother, he found him and his wife residing in the house of his wife's mother, a widow, who supported herself by letting lodgings at Dover!"

"And how has Charles Hazeldine's widow managed to live with her child to support since his death?"

"By going out as a music teacher, and helping her mother with the lodgers, and I daresay, if the truth was known, that the girl who is coming here as my niece, has waited upon her grandmother's lodgers like a servant."

"And did the widow never write and ask George to help her, Louisa?"

"No, mamma, never," replied Mrs. Hazeldine; yet as she spoke conscience whispered, "But she *appealed to you* once on behalf of her child, and do

you remember the letter you sent her in reply?" Ah, yes; the proud, haughty, selfish woman well remembered the unkind and reproachful words that letter contained, but she did not mention it to her mother. "We had no idea whether she and the child were still living," Mrs. Hazeldine went on to say, "until about a fortnight ago, when George received a most illiterate letter from a woman calling herself the child's nurse."

"And did this woman ask George to receive the child?"

"Oh, no! She enclosed a sealed letter addressed to George, in Charles Hazeldine's writing. It was a curious address. Here is the envelope," she continued, and then read,—

"TO MY BROTHER, GEORGE HAZELDINE.

"To be forwarded it my child should become motherless before she reaches the age of sixteen."

"I've got the letter in my pocket, mamma; you may read it if you like; it will show you what queer notions the child's relations have about religion."

Mrs. Burford took the letter from her daughter's hand, and read with deep interest, as follows:—

"DOVER, *July 10th*, 186—.

"MY DEAR BROTHER GEORGE,—When you receive this, you will know that my dear child has lost both father and mother. He in whom I trust has said, 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive,' yet I would fain ask you not to forget my child, who will have lost her mother before she is sixteen, otherwise this appeal would never have reached you. Will you, therefore, my dear brother, give the poor little orphan a home ?

"I remember meeting for the first time, on your wedding day, the handsome young lady who became your wife ; and I do not think Louisa Hazeldine will refuse to be kind to my orphan daughter, her husband's niece. I leave her in God's hands, and may He influence the hearts of my brother and sister to be kind to my little Mary. Farewell, till we meet on that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest."

"May I read the letter, Louisa?" asked Ellen Burford, as she saw her mother about to return it to her sister.

"Of course you may, Ellen ; but don't mention the subject to George ; he does not know I have it."

"There must have been something peculiar about Charles Hazeldine to leave such a letter as that," remarked Mrs. Burford. "Why did he not ask his

brother to take the child as soon as she was old enough to leave her mother? You might then have trained her with your own children. A girl of eleven, brought up by a low mother, will give you a great deal of trouble, I am afraid."

"Oh, I have made up my mind to all that," replied Mrs. Hazeldine, "especially if she's been taught those absurd notions about religion which made her father so queer. However, she will soon find out that I object to such nonsense being introduced among my children."

The drawing-room windows of Park House overlooked a splendid lawn and garden at the back; therefore as a cab drove to the front entrance, the sound of wheels did not reach the ears of the ladies who were talking so earnestly.

Mr. Hazeldine, however, who was crossing the hall, paused at the sound, and waited till the summons from the door bell should be answered. In a house ruled by such a mistress, he was not likely to wait long. A servant quickly appeared, and as she opened the front door, Mr. Hazeldine saw a little figure in black standing on the step, and looking timidly in the house, as if afraid to enter.

Never in after scenes of joy or sorrow did George Hazeldine forget his first impression produced by the appearance of his dead brother's child.

The face of that brother when a boy, ten years younger than himself, dear little Charlie, rose before him, though softened and more feminine. The brown wavy hair ; the large blue eyes, now opened wide with surprise and admiration of the beautiful home to which she had been brought ; the lips parted with a smile of inquiry as a strange gentleman advanced to welcome her, were all so completely a representation of his boy brother, that his whole sympathies went forth to that brother's child.

Mary Hazeldine completed her victory by stepping into the hall as her uncle approached, and exclaiming in her gentle voice,—

“Uncle George? Oh yes, I know it must be.”

To the surprise of Mr. Parkes, who had followed with the trunk after paying for the cab, Mr. Hazeldine lifted the little girl in his arms, and kissing her fondly said,—

“Welcome to your new home, my dear. For the memory of my lost brother, it shall not be my fault if you are not happy here. Take Miss Mary Hazeldine to her room, Esther,” he continued, addressing the housemaid ; “and, Parkes, when you have carried up the young lady's box, tell your mistress she has arrived.”

“*Miss Mary Hazeldine and the young lady's box,*” said Parkes to himself. “I wonder what mistress

would say if she heard that, after all she's said about the little girl,—and it's my belief she's more of a real lady than any of our young misses."

When Parkes, in obedience to his master's orders, informed Mrs. Hazeldine in a very pointed manner that *Miss* Hazeldine had arrived, and that Esther had taken the *young lady* to bed, she was for a moment rather startled, yet she merely replied,—

"Oh, very well, Parkes ; tell your master that tea is ready."

Ellen Burford rose as the young man turned to leave the room. Parkes, as she approached, held the door open for her to pass out, and then closed it quickly as he saw the young lady waiting to speak to him.

"Where is the little girl, Parkes?" she said.

"I don't know, Miss, but I'll send Esther up to you," he replied. Ellen Burford at once went upstairs to wait for Esther in her own room.

She had not to wait long ; every servant in the house was ready to attend to the requests of Ellen Burford. Besides, Esther guessed with tolerable correctness what she was wanted for.

She entered the young lady's room with a smiling face, and without a moment's hesitation she said, "Parkes tells me you have been asking for the little girl, Miss : would you like to see her?"

"Yes, I should indeed, Esther : where is she ? "

"In my room, Miss ; mistress ordered a little bed to be put up there for her. She's a sweet child, Miss Burford,—very pretty, and quite a little lady."

Ellen Burford controlled the angry feelings which would rise at the thought of Mr. Hazeldine's niece being placed to sleep with the servants, and then she exclaimed suddenly,—

"Esther, did you offer the child anything to eat ? "

"Yes, Miss, but she refused even a biscuit: I saw she was tired and cold, so I thought bed was the best place for her."

"Quite right, Esther : do you think she is asleep ? "

"Perhaps not, Miss, but you may as well step up and see her."

Ellen Burford followed the girl to the servants' apartments by a back staircase. The rooms were neat and comfortable, and the little bed provided for the young stranger might perhaps be better than she had been accustomed to, yet the indignant feeling became stronger still in Ellen's heart as she stood looking with surprise and emotion at the sleeping child. So fair, so refined was the face, round which the auburn curls lay scattered on the pillow, while the dark lashes that rested on the cheek were wet with tears.

A sigh, half sob, which nearly aroused the sleeper,

made Ellen Burford turn from the bed, and say in a whisper,—

“Come away, Esther ; we shall wake her, poor orphan. You will take care of her, Esther.”

“Indeed I will, Miss, if she is left with me,” was the earnest reply.

Ellen Burford's reflections were very painful as she slowly descended the stairs. Prosperity had indeed changed her sister.

George Hazeldine in his young days had been a merchant's clerk. The few thousands brought him by Louisa Burford on her marriage he invested in a partnership. The energetic and strictly honourable conduct of the new partner had brought the firm great success ; and at the end of eighteen years George Hazeldine found himself a rich city merchant, and his wife had learnt to look upon poverty as a greater disgrace than sin.

Both her mother and sister on their return from India, observed this change in the rich man's wife with pain. Mr. Burford, a skilful engineer, had been able to give his eldest daughter, Louisa, a few thousands on her wedding-day ; but his long illness reduced his capital, and prevented him from adding to it. At his death, when his affairs were wound up, only a small income remained for his widow. Ellen's portion, however, was still safe ; she was thirteen years

younger than Mrs. Hazeldine, and therefore not yet twenty-five. These two daughters, the eldest and youngest, were all that remained of a family of six.

Still reflecting on her sister's conduct with anger and shame, Ellen Burford entered the drawing-room, asking herself indignantly, "Will that child be sent to breakfast in the kitchen to-morrow?" Strange to say, the question was being discussed as she entered.

Caroline and Julia Hazeldine, girls of fourteen and sixteen, had been present during the conversation, both at dessert and in the drawing-room. To neither of these girls had the arrival of the cousin been gratifying; and they eagerly questioned their mother, as soon as Mrs. Burford and Ellen left the room, about the position she was to occupy in the family.

"Is she to breakfast in the schoolroom, mamma?" was the question of Julia which startled Ellen on her entrance.

The appearance of Julia's father, who followed Ellen into the room, settled the matter at once.

"If you refer to your cousin, Julia," he said, "I can answer that question. She will breakfast in the schoolroom to-morrow."

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGER, BUT NOT FRIENDLESS.

MARY HAZELDINE awoke next morning while Esther was dressing, and asked if it was time to get up.

"Not yet, dear," replied Esther, "for it's quite dark, and the clock has not struck seven. I suppose I woke you by lighting the gas?"

"Perhaps you did; but I'm used to get up early, and I should like to unpack my box and put my clothes and books away somewhere."

"You had better wait for that till by-and-by," replied Esther. "You are to breakfast with the young ladies in the schoolroom at eight o'clock, and I'll come and call you when it's ready."

Esther went downstairs very shortly afterwards, leaving the gas burning; and presently, when she heard the clock strike seven, Mary sprang out of bed and began to dress.

Poor child! her mother had prepared her for trials and sorrows in the world, but Mary was, in thoughtfulness and womanly ways, beyond her age, and she

pondered over the fact that no one in that house had come forward to make her welcome but her uncle. Yet she was still hopeful, and said to herself,—

“I shall see my cousins at breakfast : that will be nice ; and I suppose I shall learn my lessons with the governess : I’m glad I brought my school books.”

And yet, as the hour while she dressed quickly passed, a feeling of dread made her shrink from meeting so many strangers, and it was only after she had knelt by her bed, and prayed to Him who had been her mother’s God to guide and keep her from doing wrong during the day, that she felt comforted, and courageous enough to accompany Esther downstairs when she came for her. The good-natured young woman led the young girl through long galleries and down stairs that perfectly bewildered her, and made her say,—

“I shall never find my way back, I’m afraid.”

“I hope your cousins will show you, then,” said Esther ; “and here is the schoolroom door,” she added, as she turned the handle and opened it for Mary to enter.

At a well-spread table in a large and pleasant room sat three girls, between five and twelve years of age, and a rather strict-looking lady.

“*I have brought Miss Mary Hazeldine, ma’am,*”

said Esther ; " she is to have breakfast with you and the young ladies, I believe ? "

" Yes, Esther, quite right," replied Miss Groves, regarding the new-comer with great surprise. She had been led to expect a common, vulgar child of ten, and here was a pretty, refined-looking girl, tall even for thirteen, as her age appeared to be.

So completely taken aback was the lady, that she rose and pointed to a chair near her youngest pupil, and said, " Sit down, my dear."

Mary obeyed ; and although she could not avoid observing that her cousins treated her like a stranger, she was happily not aware that the two elder girls had refused to allow her to sit on their side of the table, and the youngest, influenced by her sisters, had pushed the chair, placed for the new-comer, as far as possible from her own.

Miss Groves felt herself wronged by the false representations of Mrs. Hazeldine respecting the girl whom she had actually spoken of as her husband's " pauper niece." She saw how the poor orphan flushed at the silent neglect of her cousins, and she tried to make amends by attending specially to her wants, and taking care that, at all events, she should have a good breakfast.

Mary Hazeldine, though timid and gentle, was not awkward or shy with strangers. She replied to

the questions of the governess in her soft voice with well-bred ease, and was not daunted by the glances, intended to be supercilious, with which her cousins now and then honoured her.

"May we leave the table, Miss Groves?" said Annie, the eldest of the three.

In any other circumstance that lady would have replied, "No, Annie, wait for your cousin." But now she merely gave the necessary permission, and at the same time said kindly to Mary,—

"Don't move, my dear, till you have finished ; and perhaps you do not care to join your cousins in the garden this morning."

While the three girls were arraying themselves in warm cloaks and wraps for a run on this cold November morning, till time for study, the door opened, and two young ladies came in. Mary rose as they entered, evidently prepared to pass her by unnoticed, but that was impossible. In a confusion of surprise, Caroline held out her hand to her cousin, and said, "Good morning," and Julia followed her sister's example.

Away rushed the two girls, quite forgetting the purpose for which they had visited the schoolroom, leaving the door open behind them. They had breakfasted in the dining-room, and only waited till their father had *started to the City* to pay a visit to their orphan cousin.

Mr. Hazeldine had talked seriously on the previous evening to his wife as to the manner in which he expected his niece to be treated, and she had promised acquiescence. But a weak-minded prejudice against the child, because she had been reared in poverty, made it very unlikely that her promise would be kept. He had startled his daughters by asking,—

“Why are you breakfasting here, girls?”

“Miss Groves has another in the schoolroom now,” said Mrs. Hazeldine, replying for them.

“Mary will not give Miss Groves much additional trouble, I am quite sure,” remarked Mr. Hazeldine; “and I hope you will be kind to her, girls, now she is both fatherless and motherless.”

They did not reply; but as soon as the entrance door closed behind their father, they had rushed with all haste, and no little curiosity, to have, as they called it, “a peep” at their new cousin. The result of that “peep” we have seen.

On returning to the parlour, another surprise awaited them. Annie had entered from the garden by the window, and was talking to her mother as ill-trained children often do.

“Now ain’t I right, Carry?” she exclaimed, as her sisters appeared. “Is our new cousin like a beggar girl?”

Caroline, passing by her sister’s remark, at once

addressed her mother, but not in a manner or tone as a daughter should do.

"Mamma, whatever made you tell us Mary Hazeldine was a common, low child? Why she's nearly as tall as Julia, and so pretty; I'm sure her mother must have been a lady, and somebody has told you a lot of stories about her. I'm not going to be rude to her, I know that."

"And pray, Miss Hazeldine," replied her mother, "who wishes you to be rude to her?"

"Well, mamma, from what you said I thought —"

"There, don't talk nonsense, Caroline," said her mother, interrupting her. "You need not wonder that with so many troublesome children of my own I should object to have another to look after. If your new cousin is such a paragon of perfection, all the better for me."

At this moment the school-bell rang, and the young people dispersed, more than ever curious about the cousin who was so unlike what they expected.

Mary had remained with Miss Groves, and when her cousins entered the schoolroom they found her standing by the table, on which lay piles of school-books.

Caroline, Julia, and Annie seated themselves in silence; *they* only were the pupils of Miss Groves. A *nursery* governess had the entire care of the four

youngest, two girls and two boys, with the assistance of a nurse.

"I have been examining your cousin," said Miss Groves, presently, "and I find she is quite forward enough to join you all in many studies. Sit down, Mary," continued the lady, whose firm yet kind discipline was so valuable to Mrs. Hazeldine; "you can stay and listen this morning to the lessons, and learn the rules of the schoolroom. Are you ready, my dears? It is getting late."

Miss Groves looked at the list of lessons before her, and said,—

"We will begin with English History, the reign of Charles I. Your history is Collyer's, is it not, Mary?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Mary eagerly, as she opened her book. History was one of her favourite studies, and full well she knew the leading events in the reign of the unfortunate king.

Other subjects followed, Miss Groves requiring from her elder pupils answers in their own words, to prove that they understood what they had studied. Annie only was expected to learn by rote. Miss Groves was of opinion that, to strengthen the memory, a child should be required to learn, even parrot-like, the words of a lesson, however short, until the age of twelve years. Miss Groves, in her experience, had proved that the power of committing to memory, if

not acquired before that age, is simply impossible afterwards.

Nearly an hour passed, and then a reading lesson commenced. Miss Groves considered good reading as much an accomplishment as music or painting. Mary's cousins, to whom this clever lady had been governess for three years, read well ; but when the soft clear tones of the orphan girl met her ear, she looked astonished—so few girls she had known were good readers at Mary's age. Quite unaware of her own proficiency, Mary read on, and being seated with her back to the door, did not hear it open softly behind her. One of the ladies who were entering held up her finger to Miss Groves as a signal to be silent, and as Mary read to the end of the paragraph, Mrs. Hazeldine discovered that the voice, the tones, and the correct pronunciation of this child of a "low and poverty-stricken" mother were those of a little lady.

A slight movement as she paused made Mary turn, and then, as she saw the ladies, rise suddenly. She knew intuitively that the tall, stout lady must be her aunt. The blush of pleasure and the smile which beautified the delicate face would have compelled Mrs. Hazeldine to act as she now did, even without the feeling of shame which overwhelmed her.

"How do you do, my dear?" said the lady, hold-

ing out her hand, and stooping to kiss the blushing face. "I think I must request a holiday for my niece, Miss Groves. Are you not tired after your journey, Mary?" she added, addressing her.

"Not very, aunt," she replied.

And then another lady came forward, and said, as she took her hand,—

"Did you sleep well, my dear? I saw you last night in bed, and you looked tired."

"I'm not tired now," she replied.

And then Mrs. Hazeldine exclaimed,—

"Come, Ellen, we must not intrude upon Miss Groves any longer. I am going to rob you of your new pupil for to-day," she added, as taking Mary's hand, she led her from the room, followed by Ellen Burford.

Timidly, but with great happiness in her heart, Mary accompanied the ladies down a noble staircase and hall to the dining-room, and was there introduced to another lady, who received her kindly.

After a few questions about her mother, which the poor child answered with tearful eyes and quivering lips, her aunt said,—

"I thought you would like to sleep with one of your cousins, Mary, so I have had your box brought down into Annie's room. You will have a little bed to yourself, and presently you can go upstairs and

arrange your clothes in the drawers and wardrobes. Is that your best frock?"

"Yes, aunt," said Mary, blushing deeply. "I put it on because I could not unpack my box this morning."

"Quite right, my dear. You must wear it every day now as a morning dress, and I will have a new one made for you as soon as possible; and after Miss Burford has seen the contents of your box, you shall have all that I consider necessary for Mr. Hazeldine's niece. Your mourning is not deep enough for a mother, my dear."

"Oh no, I know it is not; nurse said so; but there was not enough money to buy more after the funeral was paid for." And then the child broke down. This cold reference to her greatest loss, added to the excitement of the last twenty-four hours, was more than she could bear.

"Take her upstairs, Ellen," said Mrs. Hazeldine, in a low tone. "Show her the bedroom and where to put her clothes; it will divert her mind from her sorrow."

Ellen rose gladly, and placing her arm round the weeping girl, whispered,—

"Cheer up, my darling, and come with me. I'll show you Annie's room; you must endeavour not to think of your trouble, and I am sure every one will try to make you happy."

Checking her sobs, and wiping away the tears with haste, Mary rose and followed Miss Burford to a room which appeared to the girl, reared in poverty, a perfect paradise of comfort.

There stood her humble little trunk, and as she knelt to unlock it, she said in a tone of apology, "I'm afraid it's very untidy, for I had to get all my books from underneath my clothes, to show to Miss Groves this morning."

"Never mind, we'll soon lay them smooth in the drawers, or I will do that, if you will give them to me."

How completely the contents of that box displayed poverty in its fairest aspect, Ellen Burford quickly discovered. Everything, though mended and patched, was clean, neat, and whole.

But Ellen took notes with a pencil as she folded the various articles, and then leaving the child to place her Bible, Prayer-book, and hymn-book where she pleased, and also to arrange her desk and other little precious but valueless articles she prized according to her own fancy, she returned to the dining-room.

"I suppose the child is in rags, Ellen?" was the first remark of Mrs. Hazeldine.

"No, indeed," replied Ellen, describing the contents of the box; "but," she added, "as a member of your family, she requires a new and complete outfit."

"That is soon obtained," replied her sister, "and I'm glad to find that this child of Charles Hazeldine won't disgrace us when she's properly dressed."

"She looks neat and ladylike as it is, Louisa," remarked her mother. "Whatever gave you the impression that your brother-in-law's child would be low and vulgar? I'm sure, at your wedding, Charles appeared a very elegant young fellow."

"Well, mamma, I'll tell you the truth. I met once, a few years ago, at a friend's house, some relatives of his wife's, rich people, living at a fine place near Dover; and they gave me such an account of the organist, whose daughter Charles married, that I expected to find the child not only in rags, but low and common."

"But, Louisa," said her mother, "an organist must be a musician, and music, or the love of it, will often refine the most uneducated."

"Well, I believe now that these people I met were spiteful and offended because the organist always refused to accept money or help in any way from them. Altogether it's a mystery to me, and although another child will increase our expenses, I'm thankful she is what she is, and we need not be ashamed of her."

While the mother and sister talked, Ellen had been drawing up a list of articles she considered necessary for Mr. Hazeldine's niece. This completed, she did

not join in the conversation ; her thoughts were occupied by a few remarks made by Mary Hazeldine while the clothes were being arranged in the drawers :

“ I hope I shall be in time for prayers to-morrow morning, Miss Burford ; Esther did not come for me to-day till breakfast was ready in the schoolroom.”

“ Were you accustomed to have family prayer at home, Mary ? ” said Ellen.

“ Oh yes, always, even after grandmamma died, and mamma had the lodgers to attend to. We had two servants, one a dear old woman, mamma’s nurse when grandpapa had plenty of money, and she stayed with poor mamma till she died, and never had any wages, because she loved her so. It was nurse that wrote to uncle about me. The other servant was younger.”

“ And you always had family prayer ? ”

“ Yes, always, morning and evening ; mamma and the two servants and I, even when I was quite a little child. It was always before seven o’clock in the morning, because of the lodgers.”

Ellen Burford had made no reply to this speech.

“ I will leave Mary to find out the ways of this house,” she said to herself. But the subject made her thoughtful, as we have seen.

CHAPTER IV.

THORNS IN THE WAY.

“H, are you going to sleep in my room?” exclaimed Annie Hazeldine, as, after morning studies were over, she burst open the door between her own and her sister’s room, and came rushing in upon Mary like a whirlwind.

Mary looked up in surprise : Annie had not yet addressed one word to her, but she replied, with a smile,—

“Yes, your mamma sent me here with Miss Burford, and told me I was to sleep here ; shall you like to have me ?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Annie, “it’s a jolly improvement on Mabel ; I suppose you won’t cry for water in the night, or say you’re cold, and want to come into my bed.”

“Not likely,” said Mary, laughing, “but isn’t Mabel the little girl I saw at breakfast ? Why, she’s almost a baby.”

“Of course she is, and there’s another improvement for us, all through you ; she’s not to breakfast

in the schoolroom any more, now you're come. I call it awfully jolly."

"Mary's look was so full of comical surprise, that Annie laughed outright, and exclaimed, "Whatever is the matter, Mary?"

"Why," she replied, "does Miss Groves allow you to use slang?"

"Miss Groves! Oh, Mary, you are a muff; do you suppose we let her hear us? Besides, what harm is there in saying 'awfully jolly'? My brother George says it."

"But he's a boy, and I don't think girls should use the same words as boys do, if they are slang. I didn't know you had a brother," she added.

"Why, I've got three brothers," said Annie. "One at school—he'll be home at Christmas—and two in the nursery."

"In the nursery? Oh, I should so like to see them; I'm so fond of babies and little children. You know, I never had any little brothers or sisters," she continued, with a sigh; "poor mamma had only me."

"And a good job too, I think; I hate to be bothered with little sisters and brothers. But, perhaps, as your mother was so poor, it was all the better."

For a moment Mary Hazeldine flushed with morti-

fied pride at a truth so bluntly expressed. Then she remembered her dear mother's words: "Never be ashamed to acknowledge you are poor, Mary. Poverty is no disgrace."

"Yes, I know she was poor," replied the poor girl gently, "or I should not have had to come here, and it's a good thing for me that I've got such a kind uncle and aunt."

The door between the two rooms stood open, and at this moment a voice exclaimed, "Annie! what are you about, telling Mary that she's poor! You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"You need not fly into a passion about it, Caroline. I'm sure Mary doesn't mind."

"No, not a bit. Oh, please don't quarrel about it."

"Quarrel! do you call this quarrelling?" exclaimed Annie. "Wait till you see my amiable sisters fight."

"I wish you joy of your room companion, Miss Mary Hazeldine," said Caroline, as she left the room, slamming the door after her.

"Never mind what she says, dear," said Annie, going near the astonished child, and putting her arm around her neck. "I'm sorry I said that about being poor, and indeed I'll never say it again. And we won't quarrel, will we, dear?" added the warm-

hearted girl, kissing her cousin. "I am glad you are to sleep in my room, for I like you very much, and I know we shall be friends."

Poor Mary! this kindness touched her heart, and warmly returning the kisses, she said with tears in her eyes, and in a faltering voice,—

"I'm so glad you like me, Annie; it's almost the same as having a sister. But don't let's talk any more about the miseries. Come and look at my books; you may read any of them you like."

While the two girls, who were to be firm friends in the future, are standing lovingly together, looking over Mary's books, we will peep into the adjoining room, where Caroline and Julia are discussing their cousin with feelings the component parts of which are unknown even to themselves. Great similarity existed between Caroline and Annie; and Mrs. Hazeldine's eldest daughter, had she been taught those religious principles which were poor Mary's only comfort, might have become a fine character; but she also strongly partook of her father's trusting, unsuspecting nature, and, like him, was easily led and deceived; Julia, who is at present almost a stranger to the reader, possessed, sad to tell, the pride and selfishness of her mother, without any of her redeeming qualities.

As she now stood talking to her sister with lower-

ing brow and scornful lip, she might have been spoken of as the plainest of Mrs. Hazeldine's daughters. Yet Julia, when she pleased, or when it appeared the only means of attaining her own selfish wishes, could be so pleasing and agreeable, that to call her plain would have seemed absurd. Although eighteen months younger than Caroline, her overbearing character made her take the lead in everything, especially with her elder sister.

"How silly you are, Caroline, to make a fuss with Annie about that girl! What Annie said is quite true; her relations must be poor, or she wouldn't be here. It's a shame that papa should have to keep other people's children, and educate them: you had better leave her to fight her own battles."

"But Mary is papa's own brother's child," said Caroline, "and she's only one child, not *children*."

"Ah, well, you know what I mean; all I can say is, I wish she had never come, pretending to be so clever, and reading like an actress."

The luncheon bell put a stop to the young lady's amiable speeches, and Mary Hazeldine, quite unaware of her cousin's unkindness, went timidly downstairs with Annie to the dining-room. Mary on this occasion made acquaintance with all the members of her uncle's family whom she had not yet seen.

At the large and well-spread dining-table sat a very

numerous party, consisting of Mrs. Hazeldine and her mother and sister ; Mary's three elder cousins, with Miss Groves ; Miss Thorne, the nursery governess, and her little charges, Mabel, Louisa, Charlie, and Edward, the youngest and the pet, three years old, who sat in a high chair by Miss Thorne's side.

"This is our dinner, Mary, yours and mine," whispered Annie ; "Caroline and Julia dine with papa and mamma at half-past six now, so they're quite grand ; but you and I and the little ones come down to dessert after our tea, and that's a jolly time."

Mary made no reply ; she was not a little confused at finding herself one of twelve at a table, and waited upon by Esther and Parkes the footman. She enjoyed her well-cooked dinner however, and returned to the schoolroom with a heart full of thankfulness to God for the rich and beautiful home He had provided for her.

The holiday awarded to Mary was by her request granted to her cousins. All appearance of the fog of the preceding evening had disappeared, and one of those bright November days which resemble May had succeeded the gloomy hours in which Mary Hazeldine had entered London.

"We are going for a walk, Mary dear," said Annie, as she brought out a black warm jacket to replace Mary's thin one ; we must smarten you up a bit till

your new wardrobe comes ; Aunt Ellen is gone to order it this afternoon ; that's a pretty hat, and your dress looks very nice, only I wish you had a muff to keep your hands warm."

There was no refusing Annie's offers, although Mary's natural pride rose against what she called "wearing borrowed plumes" to make her fine, but Annie gained her point, and as Mrs. Hazeldine saw them start from the dining-room window she congratulated herself on what she considered a fact, that her husband's niece only required good clothes to make her a perfect little lady. But in this her aunt was mistaken. If Mary's lady-like manners and habits and training had not already made her a lady, the finest dress in the world would have failed to do so.

This subject, so important to Mrs. Hazeldine, however, did not trouble Mary, and when she at last found herself in the broad walk in Kensington Gardens, though the trees were leafless, she could look forward to the time when that glorious avenue should be covered with the delicate green foliage of spring. Mary, however, found other attractions in these beautiful gardens. While walking with Annie, they came upon the nursery party, and Mary not only made acquaintance with her little cousins, but gained their childish interest by her loving, gentle manner *and playful* talk. To these little ones, all under

seven, the question of Mary's poverty or riches was of no consequence; she was a new and amusing playfellow, and they begged so hard that she would walk home with them, that Mary appealed to Miss Groves.

"I'm sorry to refuse you, my dear," she said; "but you and your three elder cousins are under my care, and you must remain with me."

"I told you so," said Annie, after Mary had coaxed the little ones into sparing her quietly; "and if you play with those children and spoil them as you have to-day, they'll give you no rest; it will be 'cousin Mary' everywhere."

"Well, I'm not used to little children," said Mary.

"Any one can see that," said Annie, laughing, and changing the subject.

During their walk, Miss Groves generally kept the two elder girls near her to converse with them in French and German; therefore, until they reached home and were alone in their bedroom, no opportunity had occurred for comments on Mary's conduct.

"What a ridiculous girl that is!" said Julia; "fancy her wanting to walk home with the children and their nurses; it just shows what she has been accustomed to."

"She's a good-natured little thing for all that," replied Caroline, "and that's why the children like

her. I daresay she used to take the lodgers' babies out in a perambulator when she was at home."

"Pray don't talk about her mother taking lodgers, Caroline ; if the servants get hold of it, there will be a fine talk in the house."

"Why they know it already, Julia ; mamma, I'm sure, said quite enough about Mary and her low relatives before the servants. I've heard her ; and as for that, Mary is as likely to speak of it herself to any one, but not to the servants. And now they have seen that she is really a well-behaved young lady, they won't believe it."

"Oh, pray, Caroline, don't talk any more about the girl ; I'm sick of hearing of all her perfections. It's bad enough having her here, without that."

The tea bell summoned the young people, and Mary seated herself at the table by Annie, with a feeling of social happiness, which added a new charm to her fair expressive face.

Caroline and Julia were absent, dressing for dinner, and their places were filled by Mabel and Louisa, Miss Thorne being seated at the foot of the table, opposite Miss Groves.

In the schoolroom Miss Groves ruled, yet at the tea table she allowed her usual strictness to relax ; the children's chatter at this social meal was therefore unrestricted to a certain point, and if carried beyond

bounds, could be silenced in a moment, by even a look from the head of the table.

By the time they had finished tea, the gentle orphan felt more like one of the family than she had supposed would be possible in so short a time, while waiting in the fog at the Charing Cross Station.

One more ordeal awaited her on this her first day in her new home; the visit to the dining-room, at dessert. While preparing with Annie for that evening event, so eagerly looked forward to by the children of the rich, Miss Burford entered the room. So elegant was that lady's slight mourning, that poor Mary looked more sadly at her own simple dress than she had done when Annie showed her the tastefully trimmed black silk which she wore as mourning for her uncle's widow.

Ellen Burford quickly diverted Mary's thoughts by asking,—

“Does not your hair curl naturally, Mary?”

“Yes, Miss Burford, but poor mamma liked me to wear it in a net to keep it neat.”

“Yes, dear, it was perhaps necessary then, but not now. Bring me your comb and brush, and when I've brushed out the curls, I'll tack these crape tuckers on your frock.”

Mary submitted to the change in her style of hair, half shyly; the white tuckers and the broad crape

sash she knew were needed, but was it really pride and vanity to wear curls, she asked herself. "God gave me my hair, so it can't be wrong, unless it makes me proud and vain. And as mamma used to say, that would be very silly, and perhaps God gives people handsome faces, and makes them clever, to try them. Oh, I will ask God to-night, not to let me get vain and proud in this rich and beautiful home He has given me."

Far other thoughts than these filled the heart of Julia Hazeldine when her cousin entered the room, and blushing with timidity and excitement, advanced at her uncle's invitation to a seat at a table glittering with silver and glass, and loaded with winter as well as foreign and crystallized fruit.

Her eyes followed the slight figure in the plain black dress, with wonder at the beautiful hair which fell in thick wavy curls to her cousin's waist. She noticed the additions to the attire, and the relief at throat and wrists caused by the quillings of white crape, and an evil spirit of envy took possession of Julia Hazeldine's heart.

All unknown, however, to Mary. Even Julia's sisters would have been shocked, had they known her thoughts. She contrived to conceal them by unusual kindness to her orphan cousin, who, seated by her uncle, was enjoying more happiness of a

social kind than she had ever known in her short life.

One by one the juniors were dismissed to bed ; Annie and Mary were to retire together. Presently, Mr. Hazeldine, who had been asking Mary a few questions respecting her education, suddenly exclaimed, "We have had no music to-night, Julia," and then added suddenly, addressing Mary, "Have you learnt music, my dear? Why, yes, of course you have," he continued, answering himself. "Can you play anything?"

"Only from memory, uncle, and I have not practised much lately."

"Well, go and try to remember something to please me."

Mary rose and went to the piano, and after a short pause, struck a few chords, and commenced the "Kyrie Eleison" from Mozart's Twelfth Mass.

In silent surprise those in the room listened to the clear liquid notes, quite unaware that tears were blinding the eyes of the player, till the music suddenly stopped, and the motherless girl burst into a flood of tears and rose from the instrument. Caroline and Annie both ran to soothe her, while her uncle exclaimed,—

"Come here, my poor child ; I'm so sorry I asked you to play."

"Let her go upstairs, George," said Mrs. Hazeldine, who had seen a little of Julia's envy in her eyes; "she's tired and excited. Come and wish me good-night, Mary."

The weeping girl dried her eyes and obeyed, and after being kissed rather coldly by her aunt, and more warmly by her dead father's kind brother, she went upstairs, clinging to her cousin Annie, whose hand was affectionately thrown round her.

"Oh, Annie," she said, as they entered their room, which was warmed by a bright fire, "I am so ashamed of crying at the piano; it was very silly; but it put me in mind of dear mamma. She used to play that 'Kyrie' beautifully. And I feel as if I were ungrateful to God for giving a poor orphan like me such kind relations and such a beautiful home."

"No, Mary, I'm sure you are not ungrateful; but that's just how Miss Groves talks to us; she is very religious."

"Oh," exclaimed Mary, "that reminds me. When does uncle have family prayer—after we are all gone to bed?"

"I don't think he does," replied Annie, feeling ashamed to own the truth at once. "But very few people that we know do. If we all say our prayers ourselves when we get up and go to bed, isn't that enough?"

"I don't quite know, Annie ; but I'm very glad I can tell God every night myself all my troubles, and ask Him to take care of me."

"But don't you say a prayer you've learnt?"

"I used to when I was little ; but dear mamma taught me that God would listen to anything I asked Him, if ever so trifling, even to help me to learn my lessons."

"I wish I could pray like that," said Annie, with a sigh ; "but now let us go to bed, and don't talk any more about your mamma, please ; it will make you more unhappy."

The two young friends were asleep when Caroline and Julia entered their own bedroom. How different was the subject of conversation between the two elder sisters may perhaps be imagined.

"How pretty Mary looked to-night, and how well she plays ! she beats you," said Caroline.

"Don't talk about the little conceited thing," replied Julia. "I wonder you can bear to see how papa pets and flatters her up. I shan't rest till she's sent to school ; and I'm sure mamma will help me to get her away from here. If papa has to take care of his brother's child, he need not let us be bothered with her."

So ended Mary's first day at her new home.

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resident in the house of her uncle, and during that time had not only done credit to the teaching of Miss Groves, but, greatly to the annoyance of Julia, had won the approval of her aunt.

Even in this, conscience had been at work, reminding the proud lady how her foolish prejudices had misrepresented her husband's niece to her household. Added to this was the fact that not one of her girls attended to her little requirements or waited upon their mother with so much ready good temper as Mary. Her cousins, Julia in particular, were only too glad to have the burden taken from their own shoulders. Mrs. Hazeldine was one to take advantage of Mary's readiness, as the girls well knew, and in this Julia exulted.

"There goes Mary again," she said one evening, when engaged at a game of croquet on the lawn; "if it wasn't for her, we should never be able to play in peace."

"You should take her place then as a reward, and let her have a game now and then," said Annie. "I have done so sometimes, but she wouldn't let me to night."

"I should say, more fool she," was the unladylike reply; "but I believe she does it to curry favour with mamma."

Mary was at this moment sitting at work under

CHAPTER V.

AFTER SIX MONTHS.

WO young ladies stood in the hall of Park House one bright summer morning in June, waiting for Mrs. Hazeldine to enter a carriage which was drawn up at the door.

"Where is Annie?" she asked.

"Annie doesn't wish to go, mamma," said Julia; "and I believe it's because you won't take Mary."

"Nonsense, Julia! Annie isn't so silly," said Caroline; "and there is plenty of room for Mary, if you would not make such a fuss."

"I shall not wait any longer," said Mrs. Hazeldine; "let them stay at home if they like. Get in, girls."

They did not need a second bidding; and one at least in that carriage, as it drove off, exulted in what she had done to keep Mary at home. Yet not for long. Conscience was not quite asleep in Julia Hazeldine's heart, and as it now made its voice heard, a feeling of dread rendered the young girl very uncomfortable.

Mary had now been more than six months a

resident in the house of her uncle, and during that time had not only done credit to the teaching of Miss Groves, but, greatly to the annoyance of Julia, had won the approval of her aunt.

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They did not need a second bidding; and one at least in that carriage, as it drove off, exulted in what she had done to keep Mary at home. Yet not for long. Conscience was not quite asleep in Julia Hazeldine's heart, and as it now made its voice heard, a feeling of dread rendered the young girl very uncomfortable.

Mary had now been more than six months a

resident in the house of her uncle, and during that time had not only done credit to the teaching of Miss Groves, but, greatly to the annoyance of Julia, had won the approval of her aunt.

Even in this, conscience had been at work, reminding the proud lady how her foolish prejudices had misrepresented her husband's niece to her household. Added to this was the fact that not one of her girls attended to her little requirements or waited upon their mother with so much ready good temper as Mary. Her cousins, Julia in particular, were only too glad to have the burden taken from their own shoulders. Mrs. Hazeldine was one to take advantage of Mary's readiness, as the girls well knew, and in this Julia exulted.

"There goes Mary again," she said one evening, when engaged at a game of croquet on the lawn; "if it wasn't for her, we should never be able to play in peace."

"You should take her place then as a reward, and let her have a game now and then," said Annie. "I have done so sometimes, but she wouldn't let me to-night."

"I should say, more fool she," was the unladylike reply; "but I believe she does it to curry favour with mamma."

Mary was at this moment sitting at work under the

CHAPTER V.

AFTER SIX MONTHS.

TWO young ladies stood in the hall of Park House one bright summer morning in June, waiting for Mrs. Hazeldine to enter a carriage which was drawn up at the door.

"Where is Annie?" she asked.

"Annie doesn't wish to go, mamma," said Julia; "and I believe it's because you won't take Mary."

"Nonsense, Julia! Annie isn't so silly," said Caroline; "and there is plenty of room for Mary, if you would not make such a fuss."

"I shall not wait any longer," said Mrs. Hazeldine; "let them stay at home if they like. Get in, girls."

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Mary to leave the wardrobe door open," she added, as she turned the key in the lock and went about her other duties.

Meanwhile Julia, who had concealed herself in the bath room, managed to pass the open door unseen, and enter her own room.

"Safe at last," she said to herself, as she shut herself in. "Oh, what a bother for nothing! I declare I'm trembling all over," she added as she seated herself, "and I haven't got the theme after all; only these bothering business letters. Whatever shall I do with them? I wonder if they will be missed by that old-maidish child. They are sealed, so I shouldn't like to open them. Stay, I'll read that letter," and she drew from her pocket the letter which had been placed under the tape round the sealed packet.

But as Julia read, she became terrified with the consequences of what she had done.

The words contained in that letter, written with all a mother's tenderness, and exhorting Mary to the utmost carefulness of the enclosed papers, proved their great value.

The girl of fourteen was sensible enough to know and to fear the consequences which would follow if she broke the seal or destroyed the documents.

"Where, oh where can I hide them till I get another opportunity for putting them back into Mary's desk?

and I hear voices," she continued, starting up, and rushing to the wardrobe, unlocked a drawer specially her own, and thrust the packet and the letter to the back, covering them with some articles of clothing.

When thus hidden and locked up, Julia felt that her secret was safe, and was able to receive her sister, when she entered the room, as if nothing had happened.

"Why, Julia, what have you been staying so long upstairs for? we wanted to have another game when Aunt Ellen left, and we couldn't find you."

"I've got the headache dreadfully," said Julia.

"Well you do look pale," replied Caroline; "why, what's the matter, Julia? Cheer up now, and come down and walk in the garden; it's not nine o'clock, and it's daylight out of doors; the air will do you good."

Only too glad to find herself unsuspected, Julia accompanied her sister downstairs. Annie and Mary quickly joined them, and on hearing of Julia's headache, expressed sincere sympathy.

"Let me tell aunt," said Mary presently, as Julia put her hand to her forehead.

"No, no, please don't, Mary;" and then turning to Caroline, she added, "I think I'll go to bed, Carrie dear; don't you come, I'd rather go by myself; I shall be all right to-morrow."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FRENCH PRIZE.

"What makes you look so pale?" said Edeline, as they were seated at breakfast a few mornings after the affair

"I had headache, mamma," she replied. "I feel better now."

"Imagine," remarked her father with a sneer, "that necks are any criterion." But the conscience quickly faded, leaving her at ease before, and then the inquiries of her mother about the proposal that she should take the French prize, that she had refused, and the impetuous girl, that she was sent from the room by her mother, and was left alone in her bed-chamber. Julia of the need of cau-

"I'll tighten up," she said to herself, "or I shall be finding out something; and I shall have our last school-day, and I shall have my prizes, I know that. And after

The girls knew Julia's temper too well to oppose her wishes, and they continued to walk up and down together, expressing various surmises as to the cause of Julia's headache.

Mary Hazeldine little guessed how closely this headache was connected with herself.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FRENCH PRIZE.

“ULIA, what makes you look so pale ? ” said Mrs. Hazeldine, as they were seated at breakfast a few mornings after the affair of the desk.

“ I have had a bad headache, mamma,” she replied, “ but it’s better now.”

“ So I should imagine,” remarked her father with a smile, “ if rosy cheeks are any criterion.” But the flush caused by conscience quickly faded, leaving Julia paler than before, and then the inquiries of her mother and the proposal that she should take medicine so irritated the impetuous girl, that she answered rudely, and was sent from the room by her father. A few quiet minutes alone in her bedroom after this reminded Julia of the need of caution.

“ I must brighten up,” she said to herself, “ or Miss Groves will be finding out something ; and besides, this is our last school-day, and I shall have some of the prizes, I know that. And after all, what

harm have I done? I daresay those papers are of no use. However, I'll watch my opportunity and get them back in the desk before we go to Brighton; Mary won't take her desk with her there."

The schoolroom bell disturbed her reflections, and presently Caroline appeared and met her sister at the door of the room.

"Whatever is the matter with you, Julia?" she said.

"Nothing!" she replied; "I'm all right, but mamma makes me so wild, talking about my being pale, and wanting me to take physic. Come along, Carrie; I'm sure of one or two prizes, in spite of Miss Mary Hazeldine."

"Ah! I understand it all now," said Caroline to herself, as she followed her sister to the schoolroom; "she's jealous of Mary about the French prize, and it's no headache. I wish mamma would stop this prize-giving now that girl is in the classes. It's very hard for a stranger to have all the honour instead of papa's own children."

Miss Groves was seated at the table when her four pupils entered. Before her appeared in splendid array several handsome volumes in gay bindings, and various other equally attractive articles, and in a pile close to her hand lay the themes in English, French, and German. As she took her seat at the table, Julia

saw at a glance that Mary's French theme lay on the top.

"She must have given Miss Groves that theme the day before yesterday," said Julia to herself; "so she has not missed the papers, or perhaps she has forgotten all about them; so I shan't bother myself."

Miss Groves spoke, and dispersed Julia's reflections. After awarding the various prizes which had been obtained by the greatest number of marks, Miss Groves laid her hand on the themes.

"I am very much pleased with all the English themes, my dear girls," she said, "but Julia's is decidedly the best, both in composition and orthography. I am afraid, my dear Caroline, that you are neglecting your own language to excel in German. Your theme in that language is very good, and unmistakably merits the first prize, while Annie claims the second. Then turning to Mary, Miss Groves said,—

"I am glad to give you the first French prize, my dear; for although you are far behind your cousins in conversational French, your theme is more correct than theirs, both in idiom, spelling, and grammatical construction."

Mary rose blushing deeply to receive as her prize a beautifully bound copy of Racine's works; and while Annie kissed her as a sign of congratulation, to her

great surprise Julia rose and followed her sister's example, saying as she did so,—

“I am very glad you have won the French prize, Mary.”

“I will leave you to examine your acquisitions, my dear girls,” said Miss Groves, rising; “you have to thank your dear kind parents, and Mary her uncle and aunt, for these valuable gifts which they purchase for you every year to encourage you in your studies.”

As Miss Groves left the room, a boy of thirteen rushed in, after greeting Miss Groves, whom he met at the door, in schoolboy fashion, but not rudely.

“Hallo, girls! how are you?” and the sisters with eager affection left their new attractions to welcome their lively brother.

“Prizes!” he exclaimed. “Oh, what jolly books! has Cousin Polly got one?”

“Yes, more than one,” exclaimed Mary. “Come and look at my French prize, Fred.”

“Yes, she's topped us all,” exclaimed Julia; “it's the first French prize.”

“I'm awfully glad,” cried the boy; “but who'll have a game at croquet with me? there's no croquet at school, and I declare I'm forgetting all about it.”

“What! croquet already!” said Caroline. “Why, how long have you been home?”

“Oh, hours, and mamma wouldn't let me come up,

because she said Miss Groves was giving the prizes, and it's nearly twelve o'clock now."

"It's too hot to play yet," said Caroline.

"No, that it isn't; there's heaps of clouds, and I daresay it will rain by-and-by."

"I'll have a game with you, Fred," said Mary, "and I'm sure Annie will."

"All right, that's jolly; come along. I'll go and get the mallets and balls ready;" and he bounded out of the room as he spoke.

In a few minutes the prizes had been carefully put away and the schoolroom cleared, Caroline going downstairs to tell her mother the result of the themes, and who had gained the other prizes.

Julia, who fancied she had now another opportunity to replace the papers, crept cautiously into Mary's room. All to no purpose: the keys were not there, and the desk was locked. Back she went to fetch her own keys, but not one would fit the lock.

"I won't bother about it any more," she said to herself. "Mary won't take her box to Brighton, and we're going on Tuesday. I daresay she's forgotten all about what her desk contains."

It was now Friday, and in after-life Julia never forgot how she tried to silence conscience during those three days when time seemed to be leaden-winged.

Monday evening arrived, and by this time a new

difficulty had arisen to make Julia conscious of the truth of those lines of Sir Walter Scott—

“ Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive ! ”

Too truly she felt as if entangled in a net from which she could not get free.

“ Miss Julia, I want your keys to open that drawer ; all your collars are in there, and the box must be packed before you go to bed.”

“ Oh, I can do that, Esther, don't you trouble. I'll have it done in time, never fear.”

Not sorry to escape from having to arrange the finery for so impetuous a young lady in the till of her box, Esther gladly took her departure, and Julia was again alone.

Taking out her keys, she opened the wardrobe drawer, and removing a few ribbons and cuffs, exposed to view the papers which had already caused her so much annoyance.

“ What can I do with the horrid things ? ” she said to herself ; “ they're no use to me. I'm sure, if it had been winter, with a fire in the room, I should have burnt them long ago.”

“ Go and tell your cousin all about it,” whispered conscience. Then the proud spirit rose.

“ What ! and let her know about the French

theme ! No, I can't stoop to that. I've got a match, and I could easily burn them, even now, in the fender ;" and then, after a pause, " Perhaps the lawyers have got copies ; and then if Mary should miss them out of her desk ! besides, I think by her mother's letter that those papers are about money. No, I won't burn them. Oh, I know ; of course the wardrobe won't be moved while we are away. I'll throw them up to the top ; there's a hollow place I know, hidden by the cornice ; they'll be out of sight there, and quite safe."

The first dinner bell rang, and Julia hastened to dress, saying, " I'll manage it while the others are at dessert."

Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Hazeldine were having a very serious talk in the dressing-room of the former, while he prepared for dinner. On entering the house, he had opened the drawing-room, and said,—

" Are you dressed for dinner, Louisa ?"

" Yes, of course," she replied.

" Then come upstairs ; I want to talk to you before dinner."

Mrs. Hazeldine had therefore seated herself in her husband's dressing-room, in a state of mind the principal sentiment of which was curiosity.

" I've had a visit from a lawyer to-day, my dear, making inquiries about my niece Mary."

"What!" she exclaimed, and then—"Oh, some debts of her mother's, I suppose, which he expects you to pay."

"On the contrary," replied Mr. Hazeldine, turning as he spoke towards his wife. "It appears that if it can be proved that my brother married the daughter of Ainslie the organist, and that Mary is their child, then she is heir to the property and estates of her mother's uncle."

"Ainslie!" exclaimed Mrs. Hazeldine; "why, that was the name of those people I met at Dover, who spoke so contemptibly of the wife of your brother."

"Ah, well, I hope we shall find out now the meaning of all that," said her husband; "for those people are no doubt the present holders of the property. The question is, how are we to prove it? Charles was so reticent," he continued with a sigh, as he remembered that his wife's openly expressed disapproval of his brother's marriage caused that reticence. "I have not the slightest notion where he was married, or whether Mary was ever baptized."

"Can't you find out, George?"

"Well, yes, if you like me to advertise; how else it is to be found out, I know not."

Mrs. Hazeldine remained silent for a few minutes, then she startled her husband by exclaiming suddenly,—

"Mary has her mother's desk here, George ; perhaps there are some papers in it that will enlighten us."

"Not at all unlikely ; when the children come down after dinner, I'll ask Mary."

The reader, who is in the secret, will readily understand the feelings of Julia Hazeldine, when, at dessert, Mary was called by her uncle to his side, and questioned in the following manner :—

"Mary, my child, did you ever hear your mother speak of the church in which she was married ?"

"Yes, uncle, but not often, and I quite forget where it was, or what was the name of the church. I almost think it was in London."

"And where were you baptized ?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Mary, "but I think it must have been at Dover, for that's where I was born. But, uncle," she continued, "I think I've got some papers in mamma's desk that will tell you all about it. Mamma told me they were valuable, and that I was to be sure and take care of them, and so I have. Shall I fetch the papers now ?"

"No, my child ; only get them ready for me by to-morrow morning before I go to the City."

"Yes, uncle, I will, I promise you."

While Mr. Hazeldine had been speaking, nurse had appeared, to take the three younger children to

bed ; and as Julia heard Mary's reference to the papers in her mother's desk, she contrived to leave the room with the children unnoticed.

Had she waited to hear her father's request, perhaps before morning her better angel might have prevailed to make her confess all to her cousin, and the results which followed would never have happened.

"She'll be coming up to her desk to look for those papers presently," said the erring girl to herself. "Oh if her keys are only there, that I may put them back in time !"

Trembling with haste, Julia reached her room, unlocked her wardrobe drawer, and seized the packet ; but on reaching her cousin's room, the absence of the keys and the locked desk foiled her intention.

Back she went to her room, and seating herself at the window, with the papers held fast in her hand, revolved in her mind every plan she could think of but the right one to relieve her anxiety. To destroy the papers, now her father had heard of them, was out of the question. "I'll hide them on the top of the wardrobe," she said at last, rising quickly, and placing a chair before the wardrobe. This piece of furniture rested on a chest of drawers, the edge of which projected in a flat surface some inches beyond it. The doors were open, as many of the shelves had

been emptied to fill the boxes. A summer twilight still lingered, yet the room was in shadow.

Julia mounted the chair, and clinging to one of the empty shelves, endeavoured to rest her foot firmly on the projecting ledge of the drawers. She had succeeded in doing so, and had raised the hand which held the papers, to throw them on the top, when footsteps on the stairs and the sound of her name—"Julia! Julia! where are you?"—in Mary's voice, deprived her of self-possession. Wildly she threw the parcel from her, and at the same moment the shelf to which she clung slipped forward in its groove, and with a shriek that terrified Mary, Julia fell to the ground, bringing with her the shelf and the chair, and causing a noise that alarmed the house. At the same moment the door between the two rooms opened, and the packet of letters thrown by Julia fell at Mary's feet.

A sudden impulse, for which she could never account, made her stoop to pick up the parcel and place it in her pocket, even while rushing hastily to her cousin's assistance. When almost the whole household reached the room, Mary was kneeling on the floor, supporting Julia's head.

"Oh, she is dead!" screamed the mother, as she saw the white face. "Oh, send for Dr. Adams! My poor child!"

"Hush! hush! Louisa; the doctor is sent for," said her husband. "The poor girl has fallen, and is no doubt stunned. Here, some one assist Miss Mary," he added, as he noticed poor Mary's white face.

Esther and nurse came forward, and lifted the insensible girl on her bed. This movement evidently caused pain, for she moaned piteously; and nurse, while attempting to remove her dress, discovered that the left arm hung helplessly by her side, and was, she feared, broken.

The arrival of the doctor confirmed this fear, and hours passed before Julia could be placed in her bed, with her broken arm in splints, and suffering from concussion of the brain, which rendered her for a time insensible.

Midnight arrived before the alarm and confusion caused by Julia's accident had subsided. Fortunately Miss Thorne still remained, and she took possession of the younger children, so that nurse might be free to attend to the invalid. Mr. Hazeldine remained with his child all night, while Caroline, in helpless sorrow, begged to be allowed to sleep with her mother.

"I'll stay, if you like, George," Mrs. Hazeldine had said; but a whisper from nurse quickly set that *aside*—"Don't have too many in the room, sir,

please." With a promise that she should be sent for if any danger arose, the mother, who dreaded sickness and death more than any earthly evil, left her child's sick room with a sigh of relief at the thought that she could be trusted to the care of her husband and a kind nurse.

Once during that night Mr. Hazeldine, resting in an easy-chair, saw the door between the rooms softly open, and Mary in her dressing-gown slowly advance and whisper to nurse,—

"Let me help you, nurse. I can't sleep for thinking of poor Julia. And I'm used to it; I tended poor mamma at night often, and she liked to have me with her."

"You shall help me by-and-by, dear Miss Mary, but not to-night. Now go and try to sleep, there's a dear."

Mary obeyed. She had not seen her uncle, as the chair in which he sat was behind the bed; but her voice had aroused him; and as he listened to her words, he prayed that God would bless his brother's child, and render her successful in obtaining the inheritance to which she appeared to have a claim.

Mary returned to her bed, but not to sleep. No circumstance of her life had ever been so mysterious as the fall at her feet of those papers, which she supposed were safely locked up in her desk.

She had examined the papers before putting them back in the desk ; yet even had the letter from her mother been absent she would have known certainly that they belonged to her, for the space they had occupied in the desk was empty. She could only now wait for Julia to get well to have this mystery solved.

CHAPTER VII.

"CAN SHE FORGIVE ME !"

FOR several hours it appeared doubtful whether Julia Hazeldine would ever be well enough to explain how the letters Mary had found had got into her hands. Indeed, for some days she lay on the borders of the grave, and the house that once echoed with the happy voices of young people remained gloomy and silent. At last, one morning Mary had taken her place by Julia's bed while nurse went to her breakfast. The young girl stood looking sadly at the changed face of her cousin. The sunken eyes were closed, and the summer breeze from the open window fluttered the dark hair that made the pale face look so death-like, but far softer and more lovable than while in health.

Presently the dark eyes opened, and, to Mary's surprise and almost alarm, were fixed upon her with evident recognition ; then the pale lips smiled, and faintly came the word " Mary."

" Don't speak, dear Julia," she said, as she moved

gently to the nursery bell, and rung it cautiously. Almost immediately nurse appeared, and at once pouring out the prescribed medicine, approached the bed.

Again the eyes opened, and a smile greeted nurse, which almost brought tears into her eyes ; but, controlling herself, she said, as she placed the spoon to her lips, " Miss Julia, dear, drink this ; it will do you good, with God's blessing ; but you must not talk."

Julia obeyed, but she said faintly, " Don't send Mary away, nurse."

" No, dear Julia, I'll stay," said Mary, seating herself by the bed, and then nurse hastened away to tell the good news downstairs. From that hour Julia's recovery progressed favourably, yet nearly a month elapsed before she was able to sit up.

During this period great events had happened respecting the child who had been received into her uncle's house, under the impression that the orphan, trained in poverty, would disgrace the home of the rich because she was poor. That, however, had soon proved a mistake. And now that prosperity and riches are to be her lot, let us discover if she has changed to her cousins, or to the aunt who received her so ungraciously.

On the morning after Julia's accident, and during *Mr. Hazeldine's* absence from business, the solicitor

who had made such inquiries about his niece, again called, but hearing of the occurrence, promised to delay the matter till it was convenient for Mr. Hazeldine to attend to it.

On the evening of the day on which Julia recognised Mary, Mr. Hazeldine again brought up the subject.

"Mary, my child," he said, "have you looked in your desk for those papers your mother placed in your care?"

"They are there, uncle," she replied, with a blush, as she remembered how they had been thrown at her feet; "shall I fetch them?"

"Yes, Mary; they may not be exactly what I want, yet I should like to see what the parcel contains."

Mary hastened upstairs and entered her bedroom very softly; she even held the keys as she unlocked the desk, to prevent them from jingling. The door between the two rooms was closed, yet she was anxious that not a sound of jingling keys should reach the ears of the sufferer in the next room. Lightly she descended the stairs and placed the packet in her uncle's hands, little supposing what those papers would do for her.

"That is a letter from mamma to me about them," she said, as she pointed to the envelope

pushed under the tape by poor Julia. "I've never tried to open the packet, because of what she told me in that letter."

Mr. Hazeldine, on hearing this, removed the important document, and while he reads it, we will enable the reader to do the same.

"DOVER, *Nov. 4th*, 186—

"MY DARLING CHILD,—When you read this, your mother will have passed from time to eternity, yet I can leave my orphan child to Him who said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' The large envelope you will find in my desk with this letter contains papers and documents which may be of use to you in the future. They are sealed up, and need not be opened, unless any one requires to know where your parents were married, or the name of the church in which you were baptized. Other letters and papers are also enclosed in that envelope which I cannot now explain to you; they may be of no value, yet keep them safe in your desk. Good-bye, my darling child. Once more let your mother entreat you to trust in Him, and to pray to Him in every trouble, however trifling, who has said, 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the Guide of my youth?'

"Your loving mother in death,

"MARIA HAZELDINE."

Mr. Hazeldine read this letter with the deepest interest, but he merely said, "I must keep these papers, Mary; they will be quite safe; you can trust them with me?"

"Oh, yes, uncle, and I'm glad you have got them now, instead of me; for I was always obliged to lock my desk while they were in it, and now I needn't, and it's such a relief."

Mr. Hazeldine laughed as he carefully deposited the papers that had already caused so much trouble in his pocket, yet reflecting as he did so, that on the information they contained perhaps rested a fortune for his brother's indigent child, his now dearly loved niece. Yet, while thus interested in the future welfare of the orphan, Mr. Hazeldine's loving heart was overwhelmed with anxiety on account of his daughter, and not until Julia could be pronounced convalescent would he make another appointment with the solicitor who had first introduced the subject of Mary Hazeldine's antecedents.

But on the evening referred to he remained up to read the mysterious documents; and after, as usual, a visit to his sick daughter, in the morning he told his wife the result of his examination.

"I read those papers last evening, before I came to bed, Louisa," he said.

"And I suppose there was nothing in them after all."

"Nothing in them! Why, Louisa, they contain proofs of Charles's marriage and the baptism of Mary, with other letters, which render the child of Charles and Maria Hazeldine the heiress of a large estate with an income of £5000 a year."

"Why, George, is it possible? You take away my breath. Shall you tell the child?"

"Not till the matters are all legally settled, my dear. Besides, there are letters that prove how shamefully Mary's maternal grandfather was treated by his step-brother because he was too honourable to sign an unjust deed. It is too long a story to tell you now, but it clearly proves that Mary's nearest relatives chose to be poor rather than accept money obtained by dishonourable means." And these were the discoveries made by the packet which through Julia's jealousy and curiosity had so narrowly escaped destruction or concealment.

It was not long before the change in Mary's fortunes became known in her uncle's household. He had had some difficulty in making her understand her position by showing her the letters and the certificates which made her the rightful heir to the Ainslie estate on the death of her great-uncle. One letter only *caused* her to flush with joyful excitement. Pro-

spective riches and honour were nothing compared to the glorious fact that her mother's father preferred poverty to dishonour.

"Oh, uncle!" she exclaimed, "I cannot tell you how proud I feel now that my mother was poor, because it proves how honourable her father was."

Mrs. Hazeldine, who was present, smiled incredulously as she said,—

"You won't always think so, Mary Hazeldine."

"I shall in one way," she said simply, "although it must be very pleasant to have plenty of money."

"And when you are rich, you'll be ashamed to own that your mother was poor."

"No, aunt, never!" was the reply; and her uncle fully believed it.

But Mary's wonderful prospects made not the slightest difference in her manners or her character, in spite of her aunt's suspicions.

"That child will be unbearable, I expect, now she finds herself an heiress," said Mrs. Hazeldine one day to her sister Ellen, who had come to see Julia.

"That I am sure she will not, mamma;" and Julia, seated in an easy-chair by the window, with her arm in a sling, looked so unlike the haughty, imperious girl she had known six months before, that Ellen wondered.

"You have a better opinion of her than you once had, Julia," said her mother.

"Oh, mamma, I did not know dear Mary then as I do now. Nurse says that while I've been ill she's been a perfect treasure to her and Miss Thorne, and many times I've seen her sitting by my bed and watching me when I was too ill to speak to her. Some day, mamma, I'll tell you something about her that will surprise you."

"Well, my dear Julia," said her mother, "I shall be glad to hear what has so changed your opinion of your cousin, but you must not talk any more now, and I will send Esther with your luncheon presently."

No wonder Julia had learnt to love the cousin she once envied. No wonder that not only nurse, but every servant in the house, were ready and willing to do anything for Miss Mary, long before they had learnt the wonderful fact that she was an heiress.

Far more than to herself was Mary's good fortune joyful news to every member of the household, not even excepting her aunt; although, judging by herself, this lady imagined that prosperity would change the gentle, retiring child into a proud little upstart.

But Mary Hazeldine's principles were on too firm a foundation to be shaken. The precepts laid down by our Saviour in those two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets, spoken of

by Him in Matt. xxii. and illustrated by St. Paul in the 13th of the 1st Corinthians, and in the 12th of the Romans, were Mary's rules of conduct ; yet in her efforts to follow these rules she would have failed but for her mother's often-repeated assertion, "Nothing is too trifling to be spoken of to God in prayer, if we think of Him as a kind, loving, and Almighty Father."

When told of her future riches, the young girl, who had just entered her teens, felt frightened and bewildered, until she had knelt and asked her Father in heaven to keep her from being proud and selfish, and to teach her what to do with such great riches when they became really hers.

No wonder she ceased to trouble herself on the matter, and delighted nurse and Miss Thorne by amusing her little cousins ; and after Julia began to recover, winning the proud girl by her loving attention. Even her aunt acknowledged that Fred had been less troublesome during his holidays than usual ; and no wonder, when his cousin Mary would unselfishly give up her own employments, whether drawing or practising, to join him in croquet or even cricket, as well as other boys' games which he had taught her. It is not surprising that the boy of thirteen should speak of his cousin as "the jolliest girl he knew."

But while every one in the house wondered at the warm affection shown by Julia to her cousin Mary since the accident, the cause of that affection was known only to the young girls themselves.

One evening, soon after Julia had been pronounced out of danger, nurse was called away from her post to the nursery, just as Mary and Annie came up to bed.

"Will one of you young ladies take my place for a few minutes?" said nurse, looking into the room.

"Yes, I will," said Mary; "Annie's tired, she's been out all day. Shall I come, Julia?" she asked as she entered the door where the suffering girl lay.

"Yes, dear Mary! I shall like you to stay with me."

The summer twilight still lingered; and as Mary seated herself by the bed, she recalled the sad evenings when she had listened to the teaching of her dying mother in a twilight hour like this.

"I'm so glad you are here, dear Mary," said Julia. "Please shut the door of the room: I want to have a talk quite by ourselves."

"Are you strong enough to talk, Julia, dear?" asked Mary, as she complied.

"Oh, yes; sit quite close, dear, and then I need not speak loud."

There was a pause while Mary drew her chair near *to the bed*, and then Julia spoke.

"Mary, I have heard you are going to be very rich some day, all through those papers I heard papa speak to you about. Did you find them in your desk?"

"No, Julia."

"Where were they found, then? on the top of the wardrobe?"

"The wardrobe, Julia! why, however——" and then, as Mary recalled the accident to Julia, and the fall of the letters at her feet, she flushed in the growing darkness as she thought, "Could Julia have been trying to throw them on the wardrobe when she fell?"

The pause occasioned by these reflections was but for a moment, and then Mary said,—

"I picked up the parcel on the floor of your room, Julia, the night you had the accident, when I ran in to help you before any one came."

"Then you know I had the packet."

"Yes, Julia, I could not help knowing, although I wondered how you had got hold of it."

"And well you might. Oh, Mary, I was tempted once to burn those letters; and if I had, perhaps you would never have been able to prove that you were an heiress."

"I don't think that would have troubled me much," said Mary, laughing. "However, you did not burn them, so it was all right."

"No, it was not all right, dear Mary ; if I had not fallen that evening, the letters would have been hidden away, and perhaps not found until it was too late for them to be of any use."

"But, Julia," said Mary, with hesitation, "what made you wish to hide those letters? You couldn't know what they were about, for the envelope was sealed."

"I knew they were valuable to you, Mary, for I read that letter from your mother. Oh, Mary, I must tell you all ; I know you never can forgive me, but I found your keys one day, and I opened your desk."

"Don't say I can never forgive, Julia. But why did you open the desk?"

"Because I was envious and jealous of you, Mary ; I could not bear to think of your getting the French prize, and I wanted to get out your theme, and hide it somewhere till after Miss Groves had gone for her holidays."

"Don't tell me any more, Julia ; I know all about it now. That evening Esther interrupted you, the two doors of our room were locked, and she told Annie she had peeped through the keyhole and seen Julia at my desk."

"And you knew all about it, Mary !" said Julia ; "yet you have been so kind and good to me. Oh, *how could* you, when I had been such an enemy to

you, as well as unkind and spiteful often!" And Julia buried her face in the pillow with shame.

"Dear Julia," and Mary placed her hand on Julia's as she spoke, and held it fast, "if you had done worse things to hurt me than opening my desk and hiding my theme, I should still have been as kind as I could to you. Mamma was kept poor and treated unkindly by her relations, and yet she never wished to return their unkindness. I used to learn texts from the Bible that taught us how to behave to our fellow-creatures, and lots of verses about it in the 13th of the 1st of Corinthians and in the 12th of the Romans; and there's one verse—the 17th—that says, 'Recompense to no man evil for evil.' And oh, I remember so well when I learnt a verse in the 4th of Ephesians. A little girl I knew got into a passion with me one day, and smashed the face of my wax doll all to pieces; and when I ran to mamma in a rage, and said I would never forgive her, she made me learn the last verse of that chapter: 'And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'"

"Oh, Mary!" exclaimed Julia, "I never thought there were such words in the Bible, although I've read them often, I daresay; and Miss Groves has talked about being kind and forgiving, and all that.

But I never listened : I was too selfish ; but I will try to conquer myself, dear Mary, I will indeed. I never thought that envy and curiosity might get people into such a scrape as I got into."

"I'm so glad you mean to try, dear Julia ; but you will never succeed if you don't pray to God, and tell Him all your troubles, and ask Him to forgive you and help you for Jesus Christ's sake. You know that we can never get to heaven for anything we do ourselves—only because Christ has died for us ; but mamma used to say that if we really love God for sending His Son to die for us, and love Jesus Christ for suffering so much that we might be forgiven and go to heaven, we should also try to please Him, and show that we wish to obey Him in all things."

"I never thought of all this," said Julia, "but I will now, dear Mary ; and will you read those chapters to me every day, till I get well enough to read them myself?"

"I will, dear Julia," said Mary, rising and kissing her cousin, as she heard footsteps ; "and here comes nurse, so I'll say good-night and go. I'm sure you've talked quite long enough."

* * * * *

Several years have passed since the accident to *Julia Hazeldine*, which led to such happy results.

Mary, instead of being, as once, the despised poor dependant on the charity of her relatives, is now the owner of property and an estate which had belonged to her mother's family for many generations.

At the sudden death of her uncle, the haughty mistress of Park House, Holland Park, found to her dismay that the affairs of the firm to which her husband had belonged were almost in a state of insolvency.

True to her principles, the mistress of the Ainslie property and an estate near Dover, called Hillside, offered her widowed aunt a home. By the assistance of her solicitor, a portion was saved from the wreck of the firm, which, with additions from Mary, formed an income for Mrs. Hazeldine and her younger children.

Caroline and Annie were both married during their father's prosperity. Fred owed his position in the City to his cousin's interest and money; but Julia, who had never quite regained her health since the accident, had been the loved and loving companion of her cousin Mary from the time she became mistress of Hillside and its belongings.

"Oh, Mary," Julia would sometimes say, "how truly you have obeyed that beautiful precept, 'Re-compense to no man evil for evil.' 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'"

"You remind me, Julia," said Mary, one day, "of a verse mamma taught me when I was a child :

' I will be *even* with my bitterest foe,
Revenge exclaims, and then returns the blow.
I'll be *superior*, should the Christian say,
And kind forgiveness readily display.' "





